



*Leading environmental
protection in West Michigan
by inspiring action!*

January 24, 2013

Mr. Michael L. Robinson
Warner, Norcross and Judd
900 Fifth Third Center
111 Lyon Street, N.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-2487

RE: Wolverine Worldwide Former Tannery Site, Rockford, MI,

Dear Mr. Robinson,

Thank you again for organizing the December 14, 2012 meeting including WMEAC, representation from Wolverine World Wide (Wolverine), DEQ, and the City of Rockford. It was useful having multiple parties in the same room openly communicating about community concerns with the site and the continued site investigation and remediation processes.

WMEAC took from the meeting the understanding that Wolverine was not interested in participating in an Environmental Conflict Resolution (ECR) process – as described in the meeting handouts attached. Such a process would involve a facilitated dialogue focused on the deliverable of a shared plan to implement a site investigation and remediation effort at and potentially adjacent to the former WWW Tannery site. WMEAC left the meeting with the understanding that Wolverine was more interested in a forming a group that would receive information, rather than create shared agreements regarding how to proceed with the effort in close proximity to a shared natural resource: the Rogue River, a popular recreational destination and a valuable, rare, cold water trout stream in West Michigan. Such a process will not foment buy-in from the Concerned Citizens for the Responsible Redevelopment (CCRR) – the grass roots citizens group that is most active on the issue and most concerned about the sight.

We understand that CCRR is not a team of environmental remediation experts; however, we do not share the perspective that CCRR is wholly irresponsible and/or bereft of credibility. WMEAC participated in joint conference calls and meetings with CCRR and multiple divisions of the EPA and DEQ. During these meetings environmental scientists, remediation experts, and environmental technocrats repeatedly validated many of the questions and concerns posed by this group. In fact, at one point the EPA referred to CCRR's citizen petition as 'one of the best they have ever seen.' This expert verification affirmed WMEAC in our efforts to invest our limited time and resources into this issue.

WMEAC understands that it is solely Wolverine's choice whether or not to engage in any type of community oversight group, and that the DEQ has approved Rose and Westra's scope of work proposal submitted on behalf of Wolverine World Wide re: Former Wolverine World Wide Tanner, Rockford, MI. Yet, we are trying to bring the parties together in such a collaborative process because we believe it would ultimately be to the benefit of all parties involved, the river, the reputation of the company, the site, and the community of Rockford.

CCRR has continually communicated their dissatisfaction with the cleanup process and has



demonstrated their ongoing dedication and ability to pursue site outcomes more aligned with their perspective. Given the current lack of trust CCRR has for the process, and in the absence of a collaborative, transparent, cleanup process, it is not unreasonable to surmise the voices of these concerned and educated citizens will continue to publicly communicate their concern for the wellbeing of the watershed and public health in this highly active and visible site in downtown Rockford.

WMEAC believes that establishing a community oversight group based on an ECR model, facilitated by DEQ or a credible, independent party, would be the best way to establish facts, rebuild trust, and would serve both Wolverine and the Rockford community. One could imagine a future world in which such a process was successful and touted as a case-study for good corporate citizenship, effective local government, and public/private/NGO collaboration.

CCRR has provided the following descriptions of several trusted persons available to sit on a community oversight group:

1. Environmental Consultant. Still employed. West Michigan area.
2. Hydro-geologist. Still employed. West Michigan area.
3. Self-employed individual with degree in soil studies and drainage systems.
4. Retired Aquatic Biologist from mid-Michigan area.
5. Three professors – degrees in environmental studies/policy/ and or engineering.

At this time, CCRR is unwilling to provide names to protect the identities of the individuals from reprisal – a clear indication of how badly trust has been severed.

In addition, WMEAC respectfully suggests the following individuals as appropriate candidates for inclusion in this process (WMEAC has not contacted these individuals about participation):

1. Jim Musial, Vice President of Global Quality Assurance, Wolverine World Wide
2. Gail Mancewicz, Rockford City Commission.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request to establish an ECR process. We look forward to receiving a positive response to establish a team that includes one or more representative of CCRR as described above, as well as the member of the Wolverine executive team and Rockford City Commission as noted in this letter. We respectfully request receiving your response by Monday, February 25, 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Hood', written over a horizontal line.

Rachel Hood
Executive Director

Nicholas Occhipinti, MPP
Policy & Community Activism

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Sterret Isely', written over a horizontal line.

Elaine Sterret Isely, JD, MS
Water and LID Programs

CC:

David O'Donnell and John Pawloski, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Michael Young, City of Rockford, MI